

unfair regulations we have come to identify.

This 104th Congress has been perceived by some as being antiregulation. Perhaps the truth is that the 104th has opposed overregulation. I think to his very great credit, the Speaker has taken the lead and formed a task force on the environment. I am pleased with the Speaker's determination to pass responsible environmental legislation. I am, frankly, personally happy to be part of his effort. Although it is often lost in the rhetoric surrounding today's environmental debates, the Republican Party has a long tradition of conservation from Teddy Roosevelt, who created the first national wildlife refuge, to Richard Nixon, who created the Environmental Protection Agency. Many people have forgotten that.

Unfortunately, what often passes for debate on environmental issues in Congress and around the country is little more than a shouting match full of symbolism but actually lacking any real substance; sort of litmus test wars, as it were. If we are to make any real progress in resolving some of the difficulties associated with environmental protection, we need to set politics aside and have a reasoned discussion on the real issues. The Speaker's environmental task force has successfully identified several principles for such a debate in my view, principles that I think make good sense, we will all agree.

The first of these is that environmental decisions should be consensus based, made in consultation with the people whose homes, businesses, communities are directly affected. Bringing the opposing interests to the table early in the process provides us the opportunity to find a solution before the two sides become deadlocked in a meaningless fight. Environmental disputes routinely focus on health, public safety, and environmental protection against the question of jobs, economy, and private property rights. Obviously all of those things are important. If we get the parties talking to each other early, I believe we can make substantial progress in removing some of the conflict we see today.

Mr. Speaker, the second principle is greater. It is greater in a way that it involves State and local, our sister branches of government in the lower tiers. Having served as a mayor and a county commissioner before coming to Congress a few years ago, I know that the lower tiers mean the front lines where the people are, where what matters in our daily lives goes on. I know the importance of giving States and localities a real role in setting and enforcing environmental standards in their communities. The perspectives of local and State officials who are the people who make everyday land use decision, who deal with problems every day are invaluable in crafting environmental policies that actually work on the ground.

The time has come to end sort of the one-size-fits-all directives from Wash-

ington that really fail to recognize the obvious often overlooked fact that different communities have different needs. Alaska is different than Florida.

The last principle I will mention is providing positive incentives to encourage responsible stewardship of our natural resources. Whether we provide rewards such as tax credits, grant flexibility, and complying with regulations or offer marketing incentives, we should move away from the idea that environmental legislation always creates winners and losers. The simple fact is that we can achieve a balance that allows all sides to come away with something positive. All America and all Americans benefit when we do that.

I will end on what I hope is a high note and that is this. These principles are not just talk but are geared toward providing results, results that will help Florida, for instance, restore our Everglades, restore our beaches. Under the Interior appropriations bill, which just happens to be coming to the floor this week, Congress in fact is going to be taking responsible steps in both of these critical areas.

I believe in the end all parties to the environmental debate agree on the importance of safeguarding our natural resources. Hopefully we will see reasonable people from all sides embrace the principles we have laid out and help us in a bipartisan way achieve our goals.

□ 1315

AMERICAN PATENT PROTECTION BEING JEOPARDIZED

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. ROHRBACHER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to warn my colleagues that powerful interest groups are involved in one of the most insidious attacks on the well-being of the American people that I have seen in my 8 years in Congress. It is an insidious attack because a decade from now, if these powerful interests succeed, America will have lost its competitive edge, the standard of living of our people will be in decline, and they will never know what hit them.

What is happening is an attack on America's ability to remain the number one technological power in the world. America has had the strongest patent system in the world. Our citizens have enjoyed patent protection that other citizens in other countries have not enjoyed. Thus, our inventors and investors in new innovation have given us technology that has provided the American people with a standard of living far beyond those overseas, and has permitted our people, even though they receive more money for their work, to outcompete people who receive less pay overseas.

The American people have enjoyed the technological lead that has given us the light bulb, the telegraph, the

telephone, the reaper, the steamboat, and, yes, the airplane.

Today our standard of living is tied to technology and in the future will be tied even more to technology, but today we see our patent system, which has done so much for our people, under attack and targeted by powerful foreign interests and multinational corporations.

These powerful interests have already eliminated the guaranteed patent term of 17 years, which was the right of Americans for 130 years, and it was eliminated in an underhanded fashion by slipping it into the GATT implementation legislation, even though that change was not mandated by GATT itself.

Now for the knockout punch. We will soon have a bill come to the floor which will end patent protection in America as we know it. The bill, H.R. 3460, which I have labeled the Steal American Technologies Act, is really named the Moorhead-Schroeder Patent Act. This piece of legislation will demand, mandate, that every American inventor, when he applies for a patent, after 18 months, whether or not that patent has been issued or not, it will be published for the world to see. Every single detail of new American technology will be available to the world to steal. Every pirate in the world and the Asian market will be producing our technology before our patents are even issued.

It also eliminates the Patent Office itself, something that has been part of our Government since the Constitution, and replaces it with a corporatized Patent Office, meaning a semi-Government, semiprivate corporation, like the Post Office, which has very little of the congressional oversight that the current Patent Office has.

By the way, that same move strips patent examiners. These men and women who have dedicated their lives to making the judicial decisions as to who owns what technology, they will be stripped of their civil service protection, inviting corruption: First, publication of every last secret we have to the pirates of the world; second, stripping our patent examiners, our line of defense, against corruption, of their civil service protection.

Finally, this bill will offer rights to foreign corporations, as well as huge American multinational corporations, to challenge existing patents. Our technology even today will be under attack when the people from all over the world will be able to come in with huge finances and force our people to defend the patents that have already been granted them.

America's corporate giants, strangely enough, have signed on to this technological rip-off. First, they would like to rip off the little guy themselves without having pay royalties, and many of these giant corporations in our country have interlocking directorates and investors from all over the

world. They have signed on to destroying the American patent system as we have known it for the last 130 years.

This is truly a battle between the little guy and the big guy. H.R. 3460, the Steal American Technologies Act, is being pushed through the system by big business. Small business, the investors, the NIFB, colleges and universities that get monies from royalties from their own inventive processes, they are behind the Rohrabacher substitute for H.R. 3460.

This will be a battle that determines America's future, but the American people will have trouble understanding it. Let us hope they call their Congressman to let them know they will be watching and America's interests should be protected.

MSA'S PROVIDE FREE MARKET SOLUTION TO HEALTH CARE PROBLEMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. SALMON] is recognized for 2 minutes.

Mr. SALMON. Mr. Speaker, since the start of the Clinton administration, our President has taken American workers for a rollercoaster ride when it comes to fundamental health care reform. Two years ago we faced the scary plan called Clinton Health Care, which basically was a system of socialized medicine. Clinton Care completely rejected the idea that free market reforms, not big government, centralized control, might be the way to bring health care costs into line, and it would have forced people into managed care.

Americans were confronted with this ridiculously complex plan that would have even further increased our citizens' dependence on the Federal Government and ultimately left our children with debt even worse than today's already unacceptable high levels.

Today in Congress we have a plan, a good plan, for health care reform. It does not call on the Federal Government to take over anything. Instead, we propose to fix our problems in a manner that befits our free market economy by empowering Americans to have more, not less, control over their health care. Our plan will let Americans take their health care insurance with them when they change jobs, limit exclusions for preexisting conditions, and, perhaps most importantly, give Americans the option to choose medical savings accounts, MSA's. Our plan believes in giving people, not bureaucrats, the power to make personal health care choices, but this plan is held hostage, day 57.

MSA's, which is a component of our health care reform plan, provide free market solutions to our health care problems. Because of the fundamental good sense MSA's make, we have more and more Democrat converts to this economically sound reform option.

While I would prefer to give the MSA option to all Americans, I recognize

slow progress is better than no progress. Such is the nature of compromise. All in all, however, we in Congress have a solid reform plan, and I am proud of the spirit of bipartisanship that many have brought to this cause.

However, one more Democrat still has not joined us in this compromise, and that is President Clinton. His refusal to take it up has brought this reform to a halt. I call on the President in the spirit of bipartisanship, working together for Americans on crucial, crucial health care reform, for all Americans, to stop this hostage taking of the health care reform plan, come on board, and do what is right for America.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. There being no further requests for morning business, pursuant to clause 12, rule 1, the House will stand in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 23 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WELLER) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

May Your Spirit, O God, be with us all the day long and remain with us in our hopes and in our sorrows, in our dreams and in our defeats. Cause us never to forget Your heavenly vision and let us never walk away from the gifts of Your good grace. We know, gracious God, that Your Spirit is over all the world and given to every person and is present in our lives this day and every day, we pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. CHABOT] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CHABOT led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

REPORT ON H.R. 3662, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1997

Mr. REGULA, from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104-625) on the bill (H.R. 3662) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes, which was referred to the Union Calendar and ordered to be printed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All points of ordered are reserved on the bill.

HOW LONG WILL PRESIDENT CLINTON AND SENATOR KENNEDY STAND IN THE WAY?

(Mr. BOEHNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, Republicans have a health care bill that ensures affordability, accessibility and ensures that preexisting conditions will not deny an individual health care coverage any longer. It makes health care more affordable to small businesses and to the self-employed and allows them to set up medical savings accounts. It allows tax deductions for long-term health care needs, and it fights fraud and abuse with tough new provisions.

Mr. Speaker there are only two people standing between the American people and more affordable and available health care, and that is President Bill Clinton and Senator TED KENNEDY, and, Mr. Speaker, how long will they stand in the way and deny the American people these much needed reforms?

VETERANS DESERVE MORE THAN HOLLOW PROMISES

(Mr. FILNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, our Nation's veterans are getting a raw deal. Last week the Republican budget conference approved a veterans budget \$573 million below that recommended by President Clinton. Now the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education of the Committee on Appropriations has recommended that the funding level recommended by President Clinton for veterans' employment services provided for disabled veterans outreach program specialists and local veterans employment representatives be cut by almost \$12 million. As a result, 28,000 fewer veterans; that is, 28,000 fewer veterans, will be placed in jobs than proposed in the President's budget.

Additionally, the Republicans have recommended that the transition assistance program be terminated October 1. This successful program has